

Memorandum



City of Tempe

To: Mayor and City Council

From: Shelley Hearn, Community Services Director, x8906

Through: Andrew Ching, City Manager, x8575
Steven Methvin, Deputy City Manager, x8811

Date: January 5, 2017

Subject: Tempe Beach Park Splash Playground

Background

Tempe Beach Park (TBP) Splash Playground construction was halted as a result of unforeseen construction complications in November 2015. What originally was determined to be a like-for-like replacement had developed into a complicated construction project that required the Public Works Engineering Division to hire a consultant to assess infrastructure and safety concerns. Engineering and Community Services staff, along with ForeSite Design and Construction, recommended that because of the age and condition, the splash playground be completely replaced at a cost of \$1.2 million.

Council Requested Information

At the Work Study Session on Sept. 15, 2016, staff presented Council with options that included keeping the amenity in the current site, moving it to another location in the park for an estimated additional \$500k as a part of the Tempe Beach Park (TBP) Master Plan process, or move it to a different park. Councilmembers requested additional information on the following:

- **Inventory of the City's splash playgrounds and pads**-Currently, the city has three distinct aquatics amenities that each accomplish specific recreational and service outcomes:
 - **Pools** serve a larger community interest that offer "learn to swim," open swim and competitive programming. While these facilities can be a destination for some users, they generally have a service radius of 2-plus miles.
 - **Aquatics Facilities** serve an even broader community and often draw users from neighboring cities. Kiwanis Wave Pool fits into this category because it is a year-around indoor facility and has potential to add amenities such as a flow rider or lazy river to expand its use. These facilities have a service radius of 5 miles.
 - **Splash Pads** typically serve a neighborhood and provide a drop-in experience. They generally have a service radius of 1 mile, and they are typically unstaffed and rely on self-supervision. Tempe currently operates three facilities of this type. They are located at

Hudson, Jacyee and Esquer parks. These are medium-sized pads with water features such as water cannons and spray buckets.

- **Splash Playgrounds** serve a community interest by providing unstructured free play and a heightened recreational experience. Tempe Beach Park was the only facility of this type. These facilities are staffed by lifeguards. While these facilities can be a destination for some users, they generally have a service radius of 1.5-plus miles.



Jaycee Splash Pad



Tempe Beach Park Splash Playground

The only splash playground located in Tempe was at TBP. Features included a water slide, water cannon's, spray jets and shade structures. The agreement with Cox Communications for the name of the splash playground has expired.

- **Potential alternate locations**-Staff has reviewed the aquatics portion of the *2001 Parks and Recreation Master Plan* and recommends a targeted update of this portion of the plan to more holistically identify the aquatic needs of the community. The update will involve engagement with the public and, the Parks, Recreation, Golf and Double Butte Cemetery Advisory Board and will recommend the type and quantity of aquatic facilities (swimming pool, splash playground, splash pad or spray pad) based on recognized national parks and recreation guidelines, which are referred to in the 2001 Plan.

The update will evaluate the most appropriate locations for each type of facility and determine the financial effect of construction and operation. This analysis will include a range of aquatics features including splash playgrounds, pads and pools.-This effort will inform other pending Council decisions such as whether or not to move forward with the rebuild of Clark Park Pool. The design for Clark is scheduled in the FY18 CIP budget. Staff will present Council with the results of the update for direction regarding future aquatics amenities in Tempe.

Tempe Beach Park Master Plan Project

Holistically planning the future of TBP will provide a roadmap for future projects, such as the splash playground and will consider the range of solicited and unsolicited proposals the City of Tempe receives for this prime location. The TBP Master Plan process will be underway after the first of the year and should take approximately six months to complete. The location of the splash playground would be a top priority as part of this process with an estimated completion in summer 2018.

The master planning process will include extensive stakeholder participation; identify stakeholder needs and preferences; evaluate current programming; address condition of park assets; identify challenges and opportunities; and examine programming in the Rio Salado Park corridor more broadly. The effort also will embrace the best practices of placemaking to ensure connectivity to the Downtown.

At the Parks, Recreation, Golf & Double Butte Cemetery Advisory Board meeting on Nov. 16, 2016, staff presented an update on the current status of the TBP Splash Playground. Board members were supportive of evaluating the site location of the splash playground as part of the TBP Master Plan process.

- **Potential impacts to other City park renovation projects**-There are currently no funds in the existing CIP to renovate the splash playground. The replacement cost of the splash playground is \$1.2 million. If Council decides to replace the splash playground in its existing location, contingency or GPLET funds could be used. Those funds would not compete with park renovations unless Council has identified all GPLET funds to be dedicated to the current park plan.

It is estimated that an additional \$500k is needed to relocate the playground in a different area of TBP; the recommendation could be to move it to a different park as part of the master plan process and restore the existing site. If Council determines the splash playground location should be part of the TBP Master Plan, staff will request funding for the replacement through the CIP budget process. It will compete with all other projects and be submitted as an aquatics project rather than part of the Parks Reinvestment program.

Council Direction

Staff is seeking Council direction on the following items:

- Replace the Splash Playground in Tempe Beach Park in its current location
or
- Utilize the TBP Master Plan Process to determine the splash playground location and repurpose the site.
- Update the Aquatics portion of the 2001 Parks and Recreation Master Plan to identify needs of the community.

Attachments: PowerPoint and Aquatics portion of the 2001 Parks and Recreation Master Plan